

East Texas Experiential Learning Center

Brief Program Description

The goal of the East Texas Experiential Learning Center is to reduce multiple risk factors for alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, inhalants (ATIDI) use and abuse among economically disadvantaged 7th graders in Nacogdoches, a rural East Texas community. The project consists of school-based intervention, after-school trips, weekend day trips at local wilderness facilities and forest lands, Wilderness Challenge Ropes adventure camp for 5 day sessions and community-based programming.

Objectives of the project are to increase the perception of harm of ATIDI use by high-risk youth and peers; increase negative attitudes toward ATIDI use among youth, peers, family, school and community, improve social competence among high-risk youth; increase both cognitive and social problem-solving skills among youth; increase feelings of autonomy among targeted high-risk youth; increase sense of purpose and future in high-risk youth; increase high-risk youth involvement in alternative activities which do not include ATIDI use; decrease level of conflict/violence at home, school, and community; enhance the climate at home, school, and community; increase the involvement of family, school, neighborhood and community in dealing with ATIDI problems; increase perception of harm of ATIDI use in the family, school, and community; and increase parenting and teaching skills. The interventions used are adventure-based education; Wilderness Challenge Ropes course; Lessons from the Natural World, sharing and caring for the environment; development of community spirit and sense of responsibility; cognitive learning including problem solving, negotiation, anger management and values enhancement; community training including experiential learning, responsibility, consequences, and multi-cultural sensitivity; and a give-back program including environmental community service projects and incentives that promote an investment by the youth in their community.

The program demonstrated the effectiveness of the Social Learning Model within a Risk Factor Approach in reducing risk factors for ATIDI use and strengthening resiliency and protective factors, thereby reducing the incidence of ATIDI use and related negative consequences among high-risk youth.

Contact Information

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

Program Developer

Bruce Payette, Ph.D.

SFA Station

P. O. Box 13019

Nacogdoches, TX 75962

Phone: (409) 468-1317

Fax: (409) 468-1342

Email: Bpayette@sfasu.edu